



## Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts

Volume 31  
Issue 5 May/June 1991

Article 6

6-1-1991

# Helping to Learn: Components and Principles of Reading Recovery Training

Noel K. Jones  
*University of North Carolina*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading\\_horizons](https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons)



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

### Recommended Citation

Jones, N. K. (1991). Helping to Learn: Components and Principles of Reading Recovery Training. *Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts*, 31 (5). Retrieved from [https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading\\_horizons/vol31/iss5/6](https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons/vol31/iss5/6)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Education and Literacy Studies at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact [maira.bundza@wmich.edu](mailto:maira.bundza@wmich.edu).





# Helping to Learn: Components and Principles of Reading Recovery Training

Noel K. Jones

*Professor Jones, completing his training at The Ohio State University as a Reading Recovery teacher trainer, reflects on the dynamics of Reading Recovery training at the many levels of the program: teacher training, teacher leader training, and the program for university trainers. Jones identifies a set of unifying activities that underlie the training of Reading Recovery personnel at all three training levels. He zeroes in on "the public teaching" behind the glass and characterizes it "as a powerful force toward individual self-improvement." He also explores the tension created because of watching the lesson and attending to the discussion, a sometimes baffling aspect to those who observe their first behind the glass lesson. Jones identifies a set of principles which he believes underlie a teacher's learning in Reading Recovery. His observation that the principles of adult learning are essentially the same as the principles that guide children's learning recognizes a powerful unifying concept in Reading Recovery, and illustrates the theoretical consistency that guided Clay's conception of the program.*

*Is it possible to prevent reading failure? Is it possible to prevent reading failure consistently — by training teachers and organizing school practices?*

Anyone working with reading or early childhood education would be excited to discover a program that represents a significant breakthrough in addressing those questions. Reading Recovery appears to be just such an enterprise. This program — the work of Marie Clay and her colleagues (teachers, teacher trainers, researchers, and theorists) in New Zealand, the United States, Australia, Canada, and Britain — is remarkable in its documented effectiveness in preventing reading failure for the lowest performing first grade children. Reading Recovery is also noteworthy because it has developed systematic ways — including a powerful approach to the development of teachers' skills — to continue effective intervention for at risk children. Finally, Reading Recovery has made significant contributions to our understanding of how young children learn to read.

It is for just such reasons — Reading Recovery's effectiveness with children, with teacher professional development, and with systematic implementation, as well as the depth and richness of its theories and concepts — that I became interested in this program. Having volunteered to help bring Reading Recovery training to the University of North Carolina, Wilmington, I am now in Ohio participating simultaneously in three levels of preparation: training as a teacher, as a teacher leader, and as an instructor (trainer) of teacher leaders (see End Note).

Some of the perceptions and beliefs about Reading Recovery that I held before entering the program have been extended and strengthened — for example, my beliefs about its value. But other preconceptions have changed, especially my understanding of the professional development program for teachers and teacher leaders.

Because increasing numbers of school systems are interested in adopting Reading Recovery, and because Reading Recovery's professional development model holds much promise for teacher education in general, I decided to put into writing my emerging perceptions of the teacher and teacher leader preparation component of Reading Recovery. At the time of this writing, my training is not yet complete, so what I say may not do justice to the curriculum and experiences of the program. On the other hand, there is value in writing about an

experience as it is happening, both for the writer as well as for a general audience.

The strength of the teacher professional development component of Reading Recovery has been well documented (Anderson and Armbruster, 1990; Pinnell, 1987; Pinnell, DeFord and Lyons, 1988); however, this component receives limited explanation in the literature. (An exception is Clay and Watson, 1982.) It is evident that the teacher staff development program is effective because the program has maintained its high rate of success with children in many settings, although more research is needed to demonstrate direct cause and effect relationships (Huck and Pinnell, 1985; Pinnell, Short, Lyons and Young, 1986a and 1986b; Pinnell, DeFord and Lyons, 1988). It seems also that Reading Recovery leaders in New Zealand and at Ohio State University share, at least in broad outlines, an understanding of how to prepare Reading Recovery teachers and teacher leaders; but the beliefs and practices of the professional development program have not been widely disseminated nor extensively analyzed or researched. (Exceptions include Anderson and Armbruster, 1990; Clay and Watson, 1982; Pinnell, 1987; and Pinnell and Woolsey, 1985.)

In this article, the various program components or experiences that support and foster adult learning in the Reading Recovery program are briefly described. Second, the role of behind-the-glass lessons (demonstration lessons which are observed and discussed in progress, see below) in developing teachers' understandings and teaching skills are explored in detail. Included in this discussion is a report of interviews with several of my colleagues in training about how behind-the-glass lessons function in adult learning. Third, several principles are proposed as basic to Reading Recovery's approach to teacher education, and comparisons are made to the maxims for teaching and learning suggested by Anderson and Armbruster (1990). Finally, questions and issues are raised that merit further study, both for the continued evolution of Reading Recovery and in consideration of teacher education in general.

## **Components of Reading Recovery training**

When I arrived in Ohio for Reading Recovery training, I found that information about our training program was specified in terms of times and places of activities, but the understandings to be developed were not mapped out for us in detail. I knew we would learn to teach children, to lead discussions of behind-the-glass lessons, and make visits to teachers in the field, but I did not have a clear sense of the principles and procedures to be learned. Other than *Early Detection of Reading Difficulties* (Clay, 1985), there are no manuals for Reading Recovery implementation. While some of our early experiences were intense and rich in concepts as well as techniques, many of the experiences that were planned for us seemed somewhat open-ended and amorphous. The plan seemed "loose."

Looking back, I see that my expectations were influenced by educational doctrine concerning the prespecification of learnings. After five months in the program, I have decided that the learnings at all levels of Reading Recovery (teachers, teacher leaders, and trainers) are indeed complex, and that the complexity, the depth, and even the effectiveness of the preparation depends largely upon contributions made by the person in training. The professional development process involves continuous practice, reflection, and analysis in the presence of knowledgeable mentors. It is like studying with an accomplished artist who continually presents you with new challenges and engages you in analysis and evaluation of your own ideas and performance as well as the ideas and performance of others. Reading Recovery is not something that someone else does to you or for you, it is something that you are led to do for yourself. The experiences that foster and promote adult learning in the Reading Recovery program are many and varied. Most of these activities continue, sometimes in slightly different form, as long as a person is working with the program in any teaching or training capacity.

**Teaching children.** Until they have worked with four children on a daily basis over a period of one school year and have learned to accelerate children's learning and discontinue them from the program, no one is considered trained in Reading Recovery. (To "discontinue" children means to

develop their ability to learn so that they can independently increase their abilities through reading and writing and can profit from classroom instruction.) Teaching children is also a continuing requirement for everyone working as a teacher, teacher leader, or trainer; it doesn't stop. It seems to take most people more than one year to become skilled in Reading Recovery teaching, and one soon discovers that learning about children and teaching is a never-ending process.

**Attending classes.** Everyone in training enrolls in a year-long course sequence focused on Reading Recovery teaching. This course is simultaneous with the first year of teaching children. Much class time is given to demonstration lessons behind the glass (see below), but large segments of time are also devoted to other activities focused on teaching procedures and the theories on which Reading Recovery teaching is based. After the training year, experienced teachers attend staff development sessions about six times per year. The sessions usually include demonstration lessons behind the glass and other activities. For those in training for the teacher leader and university trainer roles, a theory class and a class that focuses on the role of the teacher leader are additional requirements. Relevant readings, written assignments and extensive field experience projects are a part of these classes.

**Demonstration lessons behind the glass.** Everyone working in Reading Recovery must teach lessons behind the glass at least three times during the training year, and at various intervals thereafter. This means conducting a lesson with a student in a small room separated from a larger room by a one-way mirror. While one person is teaching behind the one-way glass, the teacher leader, or trainer, engages the rest of the class in intense discussion to extend their understandings about teaching in relation to issues raised by the demonstration lesson.

**Visits.** Each teacher in training is observed in the field at least four times per year by the teacher leader who usually observes lessons with two different children and then discusses the lessons with the teacher afterwards. The observations may include a demonstration of techniques by the teacher leader

working with the child at some point during a lesson. These visits are consultative, and teachers are expected to be responsible for learning from them. Visits from teacher leaders begin during the training year and continue as long as a person teaches in Reading Recovery, though they become less frequent.

Reading Recovery personnel are also expected to make colleague visits to observe peers working with students. The purpose of these is collaborative problem-solving to help each other become more effective in teaching children. Teacher leaders and university trainers begin colleague visits during the training year, but teachers usually begin these visits the year following their training. It is important that local conditions support this type of networking on a continuing basis beyond the training year.

Another type of visit is the site visit – an evaluative visit to teacher leaders and university trainers working in the field. Ohio State personnel or their designees observe the teacher leader or trainer in all the functions of their position, gather other relevant data, and make recommendations. Those training for the role of university trainer of teacher leaders observe some of these visits during their preparation year.

**Reading Recovery networking.** An annual Reading Recovery Conference in Ohio is available to all Reading Recovery personnel, with many sessions also for administrators and others interested in learning more about the program. Since Reading Recovery is spreading to more states and provinces, regional conferences are now springing up as well. Attendance at some conference site on an annual basis is encouraged for all trainees and experienced teachers.

Another important convocation is the teacher leader institute held in Ohio in June. All teacher leaders are expected to attend this institute during at least their first three years. In addition to some general sessions, special project groups and study groups meet to investigate issues common to Reading Recovery sites and operations. University trainers of teacher leaders meet for an additional period of time to deal with issues

related to their roles. In addition to all of the formal networking relationships, a great deal of informal contact occurs between and across levels. Many of these informal professional contacts occur during conferences, but teacher leaders and university personnel usually have fairly substantial phone bills throughout the year.

**Self-study and group study.** During Reading Recovery training a number of techniques for analyzing one's own performance are explored, including analyzing video and/or audio recordings of lessons and studying lesson plans, records, and children's writing samples at regular intervals. Self-analysis is a continuing expectation in Reading Recovery; in fact the "lesson plan" used on a daily basis is really a lesson record designed largely for the purpose of self-analysis.

Several conditions of Reading Recovery professional development promote and foster group study, including group problem-solving tasks, colleague visits, and behind-the-glass lessons and discussions. Those being trained as teacher leaders or university trainers at Ohio State receive in September a set of examination questions that they will be expected to answer orally at the end of the fall and winter quarters. Exam performance includes extemporaneous, ten-minute response to one question drawn at random from a set of twelve questions. No notes are allowed, and each person has only thirty seconds to collect thoughts before beginning to respond. Advised that group collaboration is effective and economical, this year's cohort at Ohio State engaged in productive, bi-weekly study sessions to increase our shared understanding of the theoretical and procedural foundations of the program. It is intended that during the training year, Reading Recovery people learn that they can count on the support of others in making teaching decisions and in understanding theory.

**The role of "behind the glass" lessons.** Teaching behind the glass has become perhaps the characteristic signature of Reading Recovery teacher training; yet the purposes and expectations of behind-the-glass lessons may be misunderstood by newcomers to the program as improvement of teacher performance through evaluation. According to Ohio State



Reading Recovery personnel, the primary purpose of behind the glass lessons is not to provide evaluation or feedback to the teacher but to provide demonstration and focus for the observers, who are colleagues and peers (Pinnell, 1987). The lessons provide vivid examples of children using strategies, of teaching decisions, and of patterns of interaction, thus providing topics for discussion highly relevant to the learner group.

In order to understand better the role of behind-the-glass lessons in Reading Recovery professional development, I interviewed several of my colleagues in the training class about the contributions of these demonstration lessons to their own learning. Eight persons were interviewed individually in sessions ranging from 25 to 35 minutes in length. Each person responded to questions about the relative learning value of teaching behind-the-glass demonstration lessons versus observing and discussing such lessons, and about their thinking processes and their feelings attendant upon each type of activity.

According to the group interviewed, there are clear differences between teaching behind the glass versus the role of observer/discussant of someone else's teaching. Seven out of eight agreed that one learns more from being in the observer/discussant role than in the teaching role, while one person stated that the learnings were different, but of equal value. All agreed that teaching a lesson behind the glass can produce considerable anxiety. The amount and the effects of anxiety vary by individual: some people use that anxiety to sharpen their preparation for the experience, but for others anxiety may inhibit or restrict performance. Most of my colleagues agreed, however, that the requirement of teaching behind the glass acts as an impetus toward teaching improvement. Most people will take their teaching seriously when they know that they must perform before their peers and that their students' learning progress will also be on display.

An interesting question is how teaching behind the glass affects teachers' awareness of their decisions. Seven of eight respondents mentioned an effect on awareness. Some people were less aware of their decisions than in an ordinary lesson; but for others consciousness of options and choices was

heightened. My own early experience was that I couldn't remember or wasn't aware of many of the things that I or the child had done, and five of my colleagues reported a similar effect. Most respondents also experienced an erosion of confidence; as one respondent noted, "You feel the uncertainty of your decisions much more when you are teaching behind the glass." Knowing that others are judging and discussing the basis of one's decisions, then, seems to heighten their importance, and the emotional effect on memory and self-judgment varies perhaps with individual characteristics and personality.

When asked whether teaching a demonstration lesson behind the glass produces changes in thinking and new learning, the answers were varied. Half said no. Some said that being the teacher for these lessons didn't produce a shift, but that the debriefing discussion after the lesson did. Others felt they did learn something of importance through both the teaching and the discussion. In contrast, all those interviewed agreed that new learning and shifts in thinking occur as a result of observing and discussing someone else's teaching behind the glass. One respondent remarked that these sessions "opened my eyes to different interpretations of what I have read." Other comments included:

*It changed my beliefs about what children can actually do.*

*It improved my ability to reflect.*

*It caused me to reflect on my own teaching.*

*It has clarified my understanding of things like strategies.*

*I really became aware of what acceleration means.*

*I realized things about my own teaching that I don't think I would have learned from a colleague visit.*

When asked about their thinking processes while observing and discussing behind-the-glass sessions, responses focused on two areas: comparisons with one's own teaching, and the focus established by the teacher leader's questions. Most of those interviewed agreed that, "You relate what you see to your own children and your own teaching." In fact our group was explicitly told to make such comparisons. However, others commented that they think about how they would respond to the child they are seeing behind the glass, and that they make

comparisons to their own students only if the children are similar.

The teacher leader's questions also play an important role in the mental processing of those observing and discussing behind-the-glass lessons.

*At first, I was concerned with what the teacher leader was going to ask next, and whether she would call on me. I give attention to the teacher leader's questions, and I tend to concentrate more on these as the semester goes along.*  
*I try to anticipate what the teacher leader will ask.*  
*Toward the end of the semester, I could tell what the teacher leader's focus was and I really looked for evidence consistent with that focus.*  
*After about three months, teacher leader questions caused me to project my thinking forward, to examine what I must do to discontinue (graduate) a child from the program.*

Being an observer/discussant of behind-the-glass lessons is not without anxiety, primarily because of the dual requirements of watching the lesson and attending to the discussion. Several of those interviewed commented on the tension between these two demands.

*I wanted her to be quiet; I wanted to watch the lesson. It made me more than uneasy, it made me feel frustrated. I was afraid I wouldn't know the answer to the questions. I felt like a one-eyed man at a three ring circus.*

They went on to tell the various strategies they used to do both things at once.

*I jump in when I do know the answer.*  
*I learned to shift attention back and forth.*  
*I watch the teacher leader, and when she stops talking and watches the lesson, I watch the lesson.*  
*I learned to anticipate and predict what was going to be asked.*

In summary, although it has taken a period of readjustment and learning, our group seems to have accepted the stated purposes of behind-the-glass lessons as demonstrations of teaching that are an important shared experience for a group working and learning together towards a valued goal. Anxieties still attend preparations for teaching behind the glass, but the experience both of teaching and of observing and discussing lessons is generally understood in relation to the totality of teaching and learning as conceived by Marie Clay and her colleagues, both for children and for adults.

### **Principles underlying Reading Recovery**

With the probable exception of behind-the-glass lessons, most of the activities used in Reading Recovery teacher education are in common use not only in the field of education but in many other professions as well. Extensive theoretical and research literature on such topics as clinical supervision, case studies, and peer evaluation, for example, is pertinent to Reading Recovery professional development. What matters in Reading Recovery, however, is the combination of activities. This set of experiences — some traditional activities plus one or two unique to the program — was designed or has evolved on the basis of assumptions and principles which are shared by Reading Recovery leaders, but which have not been well publicized beyond the circle of people involved in that program. An exception is the article by Anderson and Armbruster (1990) who derived a set of *maxims* for learning and instruction from their observations of Reading Recovery teaching and learning “at the level of educating children and at the level of teacher training” (Anderson and Armbruster, 1990, p. 3). In the following section of this article an attempt is made to articulate some of the principles underlying adult professional development at all levels of Reading Recovery. In this process, comparisons will be made to the maxims suggested by Anderson and Armbruster.

The first principle proposed is that *practice is the basis of concept and theory formation*. This assumption pervades Reading Recovery work for children, teachers, teacher-leaders, and trainers of teacher leaders. Accordingly, children engage in reading and writing activities during every Reading Recovery lesson. Thus, every adult working with the instructional aspects

of Reading Recovery must continue to teach children. Thus, behind-the-glass lessons are the cornerstone of training class sessions. Thus also, those who will guide adults in learning about Reading Recovery must engage during their training year (under guidance) in leading discussions during behind-the-glass lessons and in visiting teachers in the field.

Practice is essential, *not* because one learns to teach children or adults in the same way that other people do, as in an apprenticeship model. What counts in adult learning (as well as in children's learning) are not items of knowledge or specific techniques and procedures, but strategies, concepts and theories. These can be learned to the point of changes in performance only by engaging in practice so that existing theories and concepts may be tested, challenged, and revised.

Anderson and Armbruster identify another important contribution of practicum requirements. According to these authors, "Learners must be active participants in their own learning, not passive recipients of information." They point out that even when teachers are learning *about* Reading Recovery in their training class they become active learners through the demands of discussion and questioning as they view behind-the-glass lessons.

It should be apparent from the description of activities given that Reading Recovery training has a strong social and collegial component. A second important principle of learning in Reading Recovery is that *interaction with peers (others engaged in the same learning enterprise) is an important support for and source of learning*. Interaction with colleagues serves many functions. For me it has served to confirm what I know, to help me articulate ideas, to support my feelings after both exhilarating and frustrating experiences, to assist in problem-solving, to provide alternative perspectives on issues and problems, and to focus and direct my learning. Anderson and Armbruster's maxim of "multiple perspectives" captures an important part of the power of collegial interactions in Reading Recovery.

Because Reading Recovery children do not work with peers during their lessons (teachers work with one child at a

time), Reading Recovery has been criticized for violating this principle of peer interaction as a support for children's learning. Clay, I believe, would defend this tactic as a necessary but temporary measure. Only by having a trained teacher interact directly with an individual child can the learning tangles of high-risk children be unsnarled. Classroom literacy experiences continue for the child (the individual tutoring is additional); however, most at-risk first graders have developed coping strategies to hide the fact that they are unable to participate in literacy tasks and lessons in the classroom. Only when they have established effective learning strategies can they profit from peer interactions within a literate school environment. The goal for all Reading Recovery children is ability to learn in group situations.

A third principle is that *teaching and learning are strategic enterprises*, and it follows that learning to teach is a strategic enterprise as well. By "strategic" I mean that these enterprises are purposeful and that both the learner and teacher devise or adopt some sort of plan or set of operating rules to guide their activity. Neither the purpose nor the operating rules may be available to conscious reflection by a learner, or sometimes even by a teacher, but their presence can be inferred from consistent patterns of action. A corollary to this principle would be that good teachers tailor their purposes and plans to augment or revise the operating strategies of learners. (For example, a lesson for a word-by-word reader is quite different from a lesson for a child who lapses into flights of invention.) This corollary is central to Reading Recovery; the procedures have been designed to change the ways that a child deals with print. Changing strategies is difficult because habitual ways of operating are strongly resistant to change, but the pay-off is effective independent learning and accelerated progress. This principle applies equally well to adult learning: teaching strategies are a focus of clinic (training) class sessions, and the component activities of the training program require teachers continually to reassess their strategies and their effectiveness in accelerating children's learning.

A fourth principle of the program is that *adults learn through close observation of teaching and learning*. There are

several levels of observation: teachers observing children reading and writing in everyday lessons; teachers observing each other working with children (during behind the glass lessons and during colleague visits); and teacher leaders observing teachers and observing each other training teachers (on visits and other experiences). Close, objective observation is a difficult skill to learn; however, observation is not an end in itself. Sensitive, skillful observation is the foundation both for concept and theory formation and for learning to make effective teaching decisions. According to Pinnell (1987), "The primary processes of the staff development component are observation, practice, and feedback, with observation furnishing the powerful basis for the other two ...it is explicitly linked to the decision-making, theory-building process" (p. 52).

A fifth principle that underlies Reading Recovery training for adults is that *effective learners are independent learners*. Clay refers to a self-initiating or self-extending learning system in young children — something that high progress readers develop, but which low progress readers lack. The development of such a system is the goal for those low progress children. But it is also clear that the same goal is intended for adults. For example, the Ohio State trainers have suggested that it is unwise to visit teachers too often in the field because they tend to develop a dependence on their leaders, and teacher leaders are sometimes advised not to give teachers copies of their visitation notes because teachers should be responsible for making and reviewing notes of these visits. Taken together, the expectation that a teacher will accelerate children's learning and discontinue (graduate) students from the program, the variety of group and individual learning activities, and the necessity for independent operation in the field are powerful forces toward the development of independence in learning for adults in the program.

A sixth principle is that *learners should be continually stretched by challenge*, but not so much so that frustration and anxiety become counterproductive. There are certainly moments of anxiety and self-searching for adults learning to work in Reading Recovery, but when the light finally dawns that you have to dig in and do it yourself, a kind of inner peace reigns,

especially when you finally experience a good lesson or a shift in learning by your students. Learning goes on throughout our working lives and teachers should not become too complacent. Continuing contact (staff development) sessions pose learning challenges for teachers as long as they work in the Reading Recovery program.

A seventh principle that underlies learning in the Reading Recovery program is *that learners should frequently reflect upon and express in words where they have been and where they are going*. Anderson and Armbruster (1990) suggest the maxim of "reflection and articulation":

*In moving from other-regulation to self-regulation, reflection and articulation are important processes. Both processes help students gain consciousness and control over basic conceptual and procedural knowledge. Reflection involves thinking about one's own conceptual and procedural understandings and comparing them with those of an expert or another student ... Articulation refers to the verbalization of reflective thinking. It is reciprocal reflection, the sharing of knowledge and cognition with others (p. 404).*

Discussion both during and after behind-the-glass lessons is one of the primary means through which reflection and articulation are encouraged, but there are other means as well. Writing a summary of the information gleaned from the diagnostic survey, writing predictions of student progress to identify priorities for teaching and learning, writing lesson plans (which are really anecdotal notes recorded during the lesson), reviewing one's lesson plans and running records to reconsider a child's progress, writing case studies, and responding to exam questions — all involve the mental operations of reflection and articulation. This same principle continues to guide teaching practice and staff development activities beyond the training year. For example, teachers continue to be involved in many of the activities discussed above; and teacher leaders are encouraged to write down reflective comments after a teacher-training class and to use those reflections to establish priorities for their field work and their next class. The same principle also



extends to children: during lessons they are asked to express judgments of their own reading and writing performance.

In summary, the principles underlying adult learning in the Reading Recovery program are basically the same as the principles that guide children's learning: learning and teaching are strategic; one learns to do something by doing it, accompanied by skilled coaching that is careful to build, not deprive the learner of independence; close observation informs both practice and concept development; learners should be continually challenged; and reflection and articulation play an important role in learning. One principle that is not directly reflected in the program for children is that peer interaction makes important contributions to learning; however, the argument has been made above that Reading Recovery practice is not inconsistent with this principle. The child remains in the classroom program but has in addition 30 minutes a day of individually tailored lessons until those are no longer needed.

There may be different or additional principles that are equally important, but those themes suggested here are salient in the professional development programs. The training year for Reading Recovery establishes a rich environment that provides opportunities and invitations for learning. But more than that, it establishes a network of interactions and relationships that helps teachers and teacher leaders to become effective and maintain their effectiveness. Some have characterized Reading Recovery as a competency-based program. In a sense it is. But this program is built on a foundation of respect for learners' (and teachers') understandings and strategies and independence in working towards valued goals. Error in performance is tolerated and understood as a result of inappropriate strategies that are subject to change. Not all children and not all teachers grow to become effective in achieving their goals, but the number who do not is greatly reduced by the richness of Reading Recovery's learning environments. The presence of error and ineffectiveness in our schools is never used as an excuse to sacrifice the attitude of respect for children as independent, developing readers and writers, and respect for teachers as professional decision-makers and life-long learners.

## Questions for further study

Although Reading Recovery training is recognized as effective and is considered a potential model for teacher education, a number of questions about the training deserve further study. It is not clear, for example, what the effects of individual training components are if they are not supported by the network of activities comprising the total program. This issue is particularly important because many people focus on behind-the-glass lessons as the key element of the training program. Implementers may attempt to use this component in isolation; but if the success of behind-the-glass lessons is dependent upon other supportive activities, those attempts may fail. Other questions meriting further investigation include: What aspects of behind-the-glass lessons make them more or less effective? In what way and to what extent do collegial and group activities produce attitudinal and conceptual shifts? What factors are effective in making teachers sensitive observers of learning and in making them reflective learners? Is teacher selection a key factor in the program's success, and if so, what selection criteria are most important? Marie Clay and her colleagues have created something excellent, but we must understand it thoroughly so that its quality is not lost and that its contributions are far-reaching.

**End Note:** *The terms professional development, preparation, and training are used synonymously. The term professional development is probably the best fit for Reading Recovery; the term "training" will be used occasionally, however, for ease of expression, but a training model — with emphasis on replication and application of procedures — is not implied.*

## References

- Anderson, R.C., & Armbruster, B.B. (1990). Some maxims for learning and instruction. *Teachers College Record*, 91, 396-408.
- Clay, M.M. (1985). *The early detection of reading difficulties*, 3. Auckland New Zealand: Heinemann.
- Clay, M.M., & Watson, B. (1982). An inservice program for Reading Recovery teachers. In Clay, M.M., *Observing young readers: Selected papers by Marie M. Clay*. Auckland New Zealand: Heinemann.
- Huck, C.S., & Pinnell, G.S. (1985). *The Reading Recovery project in Columbus OH: Vol. I, pilot year, 1984-85*. Technical Report of the Reading Recovery Project. Columbus OH: The Ohio State University.

- Pinnell, G.S. (1987). Helping teachers see how readers read: Staff development through observation. *Theory Into Practice*, 26, 51-58.
- Pinnell, G.S., DeFord, D., & Lyons, C.A. (1988). *Reading Recovery: Early intervention for at risk first grade readers*. Arlington VA: Educational Research Service.
- Pinnell, G.S., Short, K., Lyons, C.A., & Young, P. (1986a) *The Reading Recovery project: Follow-up study in Columbus OH: Vol. II, year II, 1985-86*. Technical Report of the Reading Recovery Project, 1985-86. Columbus OH: The Ohio State University.
- Pinnell, G.S., Short, K., Lyons, C.A., & Young, P. (1986b). *The Reading Recovery project in Columbus OH: Vol. III, year I, 1985-86*. Technical report of the Reading Recovery project, 1985-86. Columbus OH: The Ohio State University.
- Pinnell, G.S., & Woolsey, D. (1985). *Report of a study of teacher co-researchers in a project to prevent reading failure*. Sponsored by a grant from the Research Foundation of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Available from The Ohio State University.

*Noel K. Jones is a faculty member in the Department of Curricular Studies, University of North Carolina at Wilmington, Wilmington North Carolina. This work was supported in part by a grant from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation.*

### READING RECOVERY ANECDOTE

*One of our first grade teachers stopped me in the hall and said, "I have to tell you this — it's really neat. This is the first year the Chapter I kids have wanted to read books to the class. Before they've always felt inadequate, but this year they want to read all of the time. They love to share their Reading Recovery books with the other children and they see themselves as good readers. Reading Recovery has put them on an equal footing with the rest of the class. You should have seen Melissa yesterday. She read Green Eggs and Ham to the class and when she was done someone said, 'Wow, that's a big book — 41 pages!' Melissa casually licked her finger, turned the page and proudly said, '42!' It was a great moment for all."*

MaryAnn Howe